



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.109/PV.1392
17 September 1991

ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1392nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 13 August 1991, at 3 p.m.

Chairman:

Mr. ALARCON de QUESADA
(Vice-Chairman)

(Cuba)

- Special Committee decision of 15 August 1990 concerning Puerto Rico
(continued)
- Organization of work

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Alarcon de Quesada (Cuba), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.35 p.m.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE DECISION OF 15 AUGUST 1990 CONCERNING PUERTO RICO
(A/AC.109/L.1768 and L.1769) (continued)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Abel Nazario (Movimiento de Juventud) took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I call on Mr. Nazario.

Mr. NAZARIO (interpretation from Spanish): I greatly appreciate the opportunity to appear today before the Special Committee entrusted by the United Nations with the task of eliminating colonialism from our modern world, a Committee which is today discussing the case of Puerto Rico.

My name is Abel Nazario. I am a young Puerto Rican, a citizen of the United States of America under the laws of the Congress of the United States, which in 1917 granted United States citizenship to all Puerto Ricans. I am a candidate for a Master's degree at the Inter-American University, and today I represent thousands of young Puerto Ricans who believe in federal statehood for our people. I am accompanied by Miss Zaida Serrano, from Carolina; Miss Carmen Ayala, from Dorado; Miss Ivette Meléndez, from Loiza; David Mojica, from Las Piedras; and Joel Quiñonez, from Rio Grande - all young university students and community leaders. The entire group is composed of young Puerto Ricans; and our task is to inform other young Puerto Ricans about the benefits of statehood.

We have addressed the Committee in previous years. Today we shall not merely be giving an historical account of our colonial problem - a problem with which members are already familiar - but we have come to demand that members of the Committee assume a clear-cut firm position on the case of

(Mr. Nazario)

Puerto Rico. The time has come to give an opportunity to the people of Puerto Rico to determine their own future, to choose their own political future which, without any doubt, will be statehood.

According to the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly relevant to our case, one of them has deprived Puerto Rico of any power - General Assembly resolution 748 (VIII) of 1953 which released the United States Government from the obligation of transmitting information to the United Nations on its possession in the Caribbean. Did the adoption of this resolution resolve the colonial dilemma of our people? No, it did not.

In 1989, the President of the United States, George Bush, made a commitment to the Puerto Rican people to provide us an opportunity, to which we are entitled, to decide definitively on our own future as a people, and the Senate and the House of Representatives began hearings and studies which have not achieved anything conducive to the decolonization of Puerto Rico.

Today, the plebiscite is a dead letter for the United States Congress, while young Puerto Ricans continue to be members of the United States armed forces, giving their lives in the Middle East in the name of democracy preached by the United States and the United States Congress. Today, young Puerto Ricans strongly urge President Bush, the Congress, the United Nations and the Government of Puerto Rico to hold a plebiscite in which, once and for all, we can decide on our definitive future.

Our situation today is unacceptable for those of us who believe in democracy. Accordingly, we are calling for speedy action by the United Nations to guarantee for our people the exercise of its sovereignty, in accordance with international law. Such action should be carried out immediately and supported by the will of each and every one of the members of

(Mr. Nazario)

the Committee. There is no doubt about the democratic maturity of our compatriots, but there is some doubt about the colonialist intentions of the great economic interests, together with the powers that feed upon and profit from administering the colony misnamed a Commonwealth.

We fully support any initiative which will give us an opportunity to make our voice heard in a free and truly democratic plebiscite. We are convinced that support for statehood will triumph by a large majority.

One last point; as can be seen, we not only defend the right of our compatriots to self-determination but also the political and economic annexation to the United States nation - of which we are citizens - as the most appropriate political condition in order to achieve political equality and dignity and to contribute to the common good of our society. Federal statehood is based on the principle of sovereignty for the people in self-determination, on the principle of permanent union, and on the principle of equal participation.

The Territory would continue to enjoy sovereignty under statehood because the United States Congress would renounce its sovereignty over the Territory, the Territory would acquire the sovereign power ceded by the Congress, and the State would agree to join the federal union, giving up the powers which were ceded by the original states in forming the American union.

We expect action from the members of the Committee and from the United States Congress. The right to statehood is an inherent right of United States citizenship, which guarantees us equal protection under the law, the legitimate right of the people to free themselves from colonialism and the opportunity to exercise self-determination.

(Mr. Nazario)

We, the young people of Puerto Rico, are prepared to work together with our families and our society to seek political and constitutional change for our people; we deserve it and we are capable of it. We, the young people in favour of statehood are patriotic - patriotic for Puerto Rican democracy, for our national pride and for respect for our fellow citizens throughout the world. We are patriots who believe in statehood, because we are all seeking the common good of the homeland, in different ways but with the same degree of patriotism.

Mr. Nazario withdrew.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Carlos Canache Mata (Deputy in the Congress of the Republic of Venezuela; Democratic Action Party) took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I call on Mr. Canache Mata.

Mr. CANACHE MATA (interpretation from Spanish): On the first of this month the Venezuelan people endorsed yet again, in an agreement approved by the Delegated Commission of the Congress of the Republic its clear solidarity with Puerto Rico in its struggle for self-determination and independence. We believe that clear testimony of the sentiments of Bolivar's homeland are in the words which we have uttered here today in the Committee on decolonization of the United Nations on behalf of the three main political parties of Venezuela.

Very much in the spirit of the parliamentary agreement to which I have referred, the Government of Venezuela, through Ambassador Diego Arria, yesterday submitted to the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to

(Mr. Canache Mata)

Colonial Countries and Peoples a draft resolution which reaffirms the inalienable right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence, in conformity with General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the applicability of the fundamental principles of that resolution with respect to Puerto Rico.

General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) itself states that it shall be applied to three types of territories: Trust Territories, Non-Self-Governing Territories and:

"all other Territories which have not yet attained independence ..."

(General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), para. 5)

It is on the basis of that last feature - the lack of complete freedom and independence - that General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) is applicable to the case of Puerto Rico, because in 1953, the year after the establishment of the Puerto Rican Commonwealth, it was dropped from the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 66 (I) of 14 December 1946. This released the United States from the obligation which it had under Article 73 e of the Charter to send annual reports to the Secretary-General on its administration of Puerto Rico. When, on 27 November 1953, the General Assembly adopted resolution 748 (VIII), endorsing the suspension of that obligation of the United States, Venezuela - although at the time it had a dictatorial government - abstained in the voting on that resolution, since it did not resolve the problem of limited sovereignty, and voiced the hope that one day limited sovereignty would evolve so that what happened in the case of the Philippines would happen again in the case of Puerto Rico.

(Mr. Canache Mata)

Nobody now questions that General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) is applicable to the colonial-type situation of Puerto Rico, since the Special Committee in 1972 adopted a resolution according to which, the Special Committee,

"having considered the question of the list of Territories to which the Declaration is applicable, recognize as the inalienable right of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence, in conformity with resolution 1514 (XV)".

Now the attempt to torpedo the development of limited sovereignty that blocks the political horizon of Puerto Rico has taken other forms. There is the recent defeat of United States Congress draft laws which would have put in the hands of the Puerto Rican people themselves the decision on their political status. A study group of the General Accounting Office, in a report made in June this year, defines Puerto Rico as one of the five unincorporated territories governed under the territorial clause of the United States Constitution.

(Mr. Canache Mata)

The Attorney-General of the United States has testified before Congress that the Government maintains the view that Puerto Rico is under the sovereignty of the United States and subject to the territorial clause of the Constitution.

All this is taking place at a time when the political status of Puerto Rico is being widely discussed. Even The New York Times in April this year went so far as to say that while Puerto Rico was not the Lithuania of the United States, "the right of Puerto Rico to self-determination was fundamental and indisputable". We also wish to refer to the decision taken in April this year by the Legislative General Assembly of Puerto Rico to declare Spanish as the official language of Puerto Rico; this is properly a new affirmation of the Latin American identity of its people and, as declared by Octavio Paz, a very significant act of linguistic independence. And here in this Special Committee we meet in August each year, ambassadors and guests, in a special and moving ritual, to voice the prayer that light from heaven may eventually shine on Puerto Rico.

After freeing peoples on continental soil, Simón Bolívar at one point wanted to set sail and bring independence to Puerto Rico.

With the passage of time, the people of Puerto Rico have witnessed a change from one type of dependency to another.

There remains the hope that since darkness cannot go on forever it will inevitably end.

Mr. Canache Mata withdrew.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Freddy Muñoz (Venezuelan Movement to Socialism (MAS)) took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I now call on Mr. Muñoz.

Mr. MUÑOZ (interpretation from Spanish): I am attending this meeting of the Committee on decolonization of the United Nations on behalf of my party, the Venezuelan Movement to Socialism (MAS). This is a great honour for me. But I am also doing so together with Deputy Carlos Canache Mata, who has just spoken, of the Democratic Action Party, and Deputy Gustavo Tarre Briceño, of the Christian Social Party (COPEI), pursuant to a decision of the Delegated Commission of the Congress of the Republic of Venezuela.

Our presence here, of course, is an expression of solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico. But I must say that the taking of a position on the question of Puerto Rico is not, for Venezuelans, just a question of solidarity - politically and morally. Basically it is an issue that relates to our national interests, if we consider them from a broad perspective.

This is so for one basic reason: Puerto Rico is part of Latin America. There are more than enough reasons to say this - reasons having to do with history, language, culture and shared struggles. These reasons have undoubtedly been confirmed on the occasion of the adoption by the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico this year of a law making Spanish the official language of the country. Since language represents a fundamental manifestation of national identity, this decision by the Legislative Assembly of Puerto Rico is a clear-cut affirmation of the Latin American identity of that nation.

Recognizing Puerto Rico as part of Latin America is the fundamental basis of every struggle that has been carried out in our countries to help ensure that Puerto Rico overcomes its colonial status once and for all and to uphold the right to self-determination of its people.

(Mr. Muñoz)

The fullest exercise of the right of self-determination results in independence. Hence, from our point of view, the call for self-determination of the people of the island is essentially a call for independence. At specific times throughout history this people has spoken out, under strong political and cultural conditioning, in favour of other institutional forms of existence. But that fact is not enough to override the fundamental reasons for achieving independence or the legitimacy of the struggle to achieve it.

In one way or another significant progress has been achieved through a complex process of efforts in the United Nations, in defining the principles concerning the right of the Puerto Rican people and other colonial peoples to enjoy the right to self-determination and independence, the highest expression of which is General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) and the successive decisions taken by the Committee on decolonization on the applicability of that resolution to the case of Puerto Rico.

But it must be recognized that, following upon a course of interactions between the Puerto Rican society, the international community and the authorities in the United States, we have now arrived at a time of stagnation. The process in the United States Congress with a view to arranging for a consultation of the people of Puerto Rico on the future institutional status of the country has become paralysed. Although we are aware of the interests that have prevailed in order to bring that about, we wish here merely to record the fact.

In these circumstances, we believe that the Special Committee must categorically reaffirm, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), the right of the people of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence; similarly, it must promote the resumption of the process that has been interrupted, with a view to laying the legal

(Mr. Muñoz)

foundations to ensure that the people of Puerto Rico can exercise this fundamental right effectively and without any interference.

I wish to add that the draft resolution submitted to the Committee by the Ambassador of Venezuela, Mr. Diego Arria, represents a well-balanced version of what, in the present circumstances, should be adopted with a view to opening up the way towards practical solutions to the Puerto Rican problem in accordance with the principles defined long ago by the United Nations.

Mr. Muñoz withdrew.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Gustavo Tarre Briceño (Venezuelan Christian Social Party (COPEI)) took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I call on Mr. Tarre Briceño.

Mr. TARRE BRICEÑO (interpretation from Spanish): I am a member of the delegation from the Venezuelan Congress attending this meeting of the Committee on decolonization in order to transmit to this important body the position of the Venezuelan Parliament.

An important political leader of Puerto Rico recently said the following: "A common strategy should bring pressure to bear on the United Nations to ensure that the United States Government recognizes the right of the Puerto Rican people to self-determination". Puerto Rico has the right to propose that its existing association be expanded to achieve independent powers, in accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 748 (VIII) of 1953, and also the right to propose that the United States Congress admit it as a state of the United States union. The Congress, for its part, has the right to determine whether it accepts the terms of a negotiated association, or whether it wishes to accept Puerto Rico as a state of the United States Union.

(Mr. Tarre Briceño)

In addition, the draft resolution introduced by the representative of Venezuela in the Committee last year indicated that

"in accordance with the best interests of the people of Puerto Rico, the dialogue should continue and ... legal measures should be adopted which will bring to a successful conclusion and, as soon as possible, a process leading to the self-determination of the Puerto Rican people".

(A/AC.109/L.1747)

From this, two fundamental points arise: first, that the Puerto Rican people is sovereign, whatever its legal or political status may be; secondly, the best way of exercising its right to self-determination is defined in a framework of rules that are absolutely clear and free of pressure and that will leave no doubt about the decision to be taken in the future.

(Mr. Tarre Briceño)

With regard to the first aspect there seems to exist a quite broad consensus, as is shown by the various resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Committee over the years. The people of Puerto Rico has its own identity, as can be seen from the most cursory consideration of its main historical, social and political features. There is no clearer example of what we are saying than the historical decision taken by the Legislative Assembly last 5 April, declaring Spanish as the official language for all departments, municipalities and public offices. In this way Puerto Rico reaffirmed its status as a Latin American people and took a far-reaching step in the sense that now development towards statehood would be very difficult. With regard to the language, as Octavio Paz, the Nobel Prize winner, said:

"The language we speak is a reality that is no less decisive than the ideas we profess or the office we exercise. To say language is to say civilization: a community of values; symbols; uses; beliefs; visions; questions about the past, the present and the future".

From the juridical point of view, the framework of regulations to express the will of the Puerto Rican people about their future has been paralysed. The differences arising within the United States Congress postponed, as everyone knows, popular consultations on the political status that were to take place this year. According to what was said, internal political and budgetary problems exist, in addition to legal disagreements with regard to the draft proposals in both Houses.

These issues have struck at the right to self-determination established in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV). Until they are resolved, the rights of Puerto Ricans as a sovereign people will be suspended. The Committee should take this situation into account when it takes up any resolution for adoption on this issue.

(Mr. Tarre Briceño)

In this connection, Venezuela will honour its historic commitment to Puerto Rico. Throughout the years we have been firm champions of its right to self-determination. Thus, for example, in 1953 my country abstained in the vote on resolution 748 (VIII), recognizing the Commonwealth as an effective manifestation of self-determination. On that occasion, Venezuela explained its vote, saying that that was the exercise of limited sovereignty. In 1960 we voted in favour of resolution 1514 (XV), and in 1961 we voted in favour of resolution 1654 (XVI), setting up the Special Committee, which we joined at the very outset.

As we see it, the basic fact determining any discussion on Puerto Rico is that here we have a people in the full sense of the word. In this connection, one of the considerations under the law that established Spanish as the official language is clear:

"The purpose of the legislation that is being adopted today is to abolish anachronisms and reaffirm our historical status as a Spanish-speaking people, freely associated with the United States. Under the strong political, economic and ideological ties that bind us to that nation, the people of Puerto Rico pledges to acquire command of English as a second language, but it is not prepared to surrender its language or culture, nor the fundamental prerogative to have its Government conducted in the language of its people, that is, in Spanish."

Hence, among the unavoidable aspects that govern Puerto Rico's relationship with the United States, note is clearly taken of the claim of a people to its own identity. It is that identity we are asking the United Nations to recognize when it takes a decision on such an important matter.

Mr. Tarre Briceño withdrew.

At the invitation of Chairman, Mr. Dhoruba Bin Wahad (Campaign to Free Black Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in the U.S.) took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. Bin Wahad.

Mr. BIN WAHAD: The Campaign to Free Black Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in the United States is a Black group dedicated to the total liberation and self-determination of Black people in the United States. As such, we believe that the issue of United States racist treatment of Black people within its territorial jurisdiction is directly linked to and informs United States foreign policy, especially as that policy relates to the human rights of people of colour and their right to national self-determination.

It is our position, based upon our experience as victims of United States racism and premised on historical and documented evidence, that the political and socio-cultural entity known as the United States of America is a European settler State; that is to say, the United States of America was established as a consequence of European imperial expansionism, which began almost 500 years ago. The land the United States occupies today was stolen from the native peoples of the region we now call North America. Those native people were systematically killed, and those who survived European expansionism were herded onto "reservations".

Africans were kidnapped from Africa in order to work land stolen from the native peoples of North and South America, and an elaborate caste system of white-skin privilege was erected to maintain the economic system of chattel slavery that was so vital to the initial accumulation of wealth that has made the United States Republic a regional Power and the eventual world Power it is today.

The system of white-skin privilege is still in place today, and it has created a domestic colonial situation for over 30 million Black people in the

(Mr. Bin Wahad)

United States that concretely influences United States foreign policy in the third world. It is no coincidence, therefore, that Puerto Ricans living in the United States suffer almost the exact same oppression, discrimination and exploitation as Blacks who have resided on the United States mainland for over 300 years.

Racism circumscribes the conditions under which Puerto Rico is colonized by the United States and determines how Puerto Ricans are treated on the United States mainland. Moreover, it is racism that informs United States arrogance towards Asians, Africans, Latin Americans and native Americans and that gives rise to the assumption that the resources and territories of third world peoples and nations are the rightful preserves of the developed European nations led by the United States, and that people of colour must fashion their future in accordance with United States and European interests or suffer embargo, as in the case of Cuba, or invasion, as in the cases of Panama, Grenada, Nicaragua or Iraq.

Clearly, President George Bush's "New World Order" is a world-wide geopolitical arrangement erected upon the vestiges of European racist colonial domination; and the matter of Puerto Rico's status should be viewed not only as a question of colonial domination but also as a fundamental struggle to deconstruct institutionalized racism raised to the level of United States policy.

It is from this historical root of genocide and racist enslavement that United States policies towards Puerto Rico and the Caribbean have evolved, first, with the so-called Monroe Doctrine fashioned by United States President James Monroe in 1853, which established hegemonic United States domination in the Western hemisphere to the exclusion of European influence, and, secondly, through outright military invasion and annexation of territories formerly controlled by Spain.

(Mr. Bin Wahad)

In December 1990, at Hunter College in New York City, almost 1,000 people from all over the United States and Europe attended a three-day "special tribunal on the violation of human rights of political prisoners and prisoners of war in the United States". A distinguished panel of jurists and human rights activists heard testimony and reviewed evidence of United States political repression of national minorities, including the vicious repression of the Black struggle for self-determination and the Puerto Rican people's right to self-determination. The tribunal findings are of course available for review by the Committee.

However, we must point out that, were it not for the absolute government control of the United States mass media, the question of United States human rights violations and the existence of United States political prisoners would be just as important an issue to the United Nations as the hostage situation in the Middle East or the issue of self-determination for the peoples of Eastern Europe. The wall of silence surrounding United States political prisoners and the imprisonment of captive combatants from the various national liberation movements in United States prisons and jails, such as the 13 Puerto Rican men and women from the Puerto Rican independence movement, all of whom are serving long prison sentences, must be broken once and for all.

Because the United States has refused POW status to the Puerto Rican anti-colonialist fighters, claiming that it is not a signatory to the Additional Protocol of the Geneva Convention, the work of the Committee assumes added significance, for without international pressure the United States will never live up to the international protocols of human rights, especially those protocols that apply to the treatment of people of colour. We call upon the Committee to intensify its vocal opposition to the continued United States occupation of Puerto Rico and to call for the unconditional withdrawal of United States troops from the island.

(Mr. Bin Wahad)

We, as a race of people thoroughly dominated by a racist culture, understand that without vocal international pressure the United States will continue its blatant disregard for the rights of the Puerto Rican people and define their disregard as "democracy in action". Our experience as a people provides us with considerable understanding of the ingenious moral deception practised by the United States Government. For example, the United States has been so effective in masking its racist domination of Black people that the world at large has little understanding of the history of Black people in the United States or how we are completely without political power or economic independence and how the relationship between the Black community and the United States and the mainstream white society is in fact a unique colonial relationship, a form of colonization that goes unrecognized even by the United Nations.

In concluding we petition the Special Committee on decolonization to intensify its efforts around the question of Puerto Rico's colonial status and to increase pressure on the United States Government immediately to release all Puerto Rican prisoners of war and political prisoners.

Mr. Bin Wahad withdrew.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Richard Harvey (International Association of Democratic Lawyers) took a place at the Committee table.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I call on Mr. Harvey.

Mr. HARVEY: I thank the Special Committee on decolonization for allowing the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) the opportunity to appear once again before it and to articulate our support for the right of the people to Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence.

(Mr. Harvey)

Our Association was founded more than 40 years ago with the motto: "Law in the service of peace", and today we have member organizations in more than 95 Member States of the United Nations comprising many hundreds of thousands of lawyers, judges, law professors and students. The International Committee of the Colegio de Abogados de Puerto Rico is affiliated with our Association. The IADL has struggled constantly for the right of peoples to self-determination and independence, and we have always condemned the crimes of imperialism, apartheid, colonialism and neo-colonialism in all their forms.

In December 1990, Lennox Hinds, the IADL's permanent representative to the United Nations, participated in a team of special prosecutors who presented evidence before the Special International Tribunal on the Violation of Human Rights of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in United States prisons and jails. The organization of the Tribunal, of which brother Dhoruba Bin Wahad just spoke, was a truly herculean labour and was coordinated by Professor Luis Nieves Falcon, who spoke yesterday.

The members of the Special International Tribunal, drawn from Africa, Asia, Europe and North and South America, included a Nobel Prize winner and seven pre-eminent jurists. They assumed jurisdiction pursuant to accepted principles of international law under the Charter in accordance with the precedence of the Nuremburg and Tokyo Tribunals and following procedures approved by Economic and Social Council resolution 1503 (XLVIII).

The Tribunal found that of the four peoples represented before it, "the right to self-determination for the people of Puerto Rico is the clearest and most recognized by the international community. With a separate territory, language and culture, the plight of Puerto Rico constitutes one of the last remaining classic colonial cases in the world".

(Mr. Harvey)

The Tribunal condemned the refusal by the United States to heed the resolutions of the Special Committee on decolonization and noted that United States President Bush's call for a plebiscite acknowledges

"that the Puerto Rican people have not chosen freely their present relationship with the United States".

The Tribunal heard testimony which

"established a military, political, psychological, economic, ideological, cultural and linguistic domination by the United States colonial Power over Puerto Rico since the beginning of the United States invasion and occupation".

It held that

"the evidence also was compelling as to the use of repression against the national movement for independence, its leaders and organizations".

Such fierce repression has been a constant theme of United States colonial control, and the Tribunal noted that,

"today that repression continues. Eighteen prisoners of war or political prisoners are serving draconian sentences, exiled from their homeland to jails in the United States. The FBI and the grand jury system are used to investigate, intimidate and intern independence activists and supporters. Thousands of others have been placed under surveillance and on 'subversive lists' for their pro-independence sentiments. At present, more than nine independence activists and leaders face conspiracy charges in Hartford, Connecticut, hundreds of miles from their homeland."

(Mr. Harvey)

The Tribunal castigated as genocidal certain characteristics of the colonial conditions imposed on Puerto Rico. These included

"the enforced sterilization of 33 per cent of Puerto Rican women of child-bearing age; the economically forced migration to the United States of one half of Puerto Rico's population; the consequent deculturization of the population; and one of the world's highest rates of suicides, drug abuse and mental illness".

Aligning itself with the findings and verdict of the 1989 Permanent People's Tribunal on Puerto Rico, in Barcelona in January 1989, the Special Tribunal called on the United States Government, first, to acknowledge the political prisoner status of those Puerto Ricans incarcerated because of their work and militancy in favour of Puerto Rico's independence and to grant a general amnesty to all Puerto Ricans currently incarcerated because of their involvement in the struggle against colonialism; secondly, to relinquish the current powers the United States Congress has to amend and approve decisions made by the representative bodies and government of Puerto Rico; thirdly, to transfer completely any power the United States Congress or the United States Government may have over Puerto Rico to a deliberative body with constitutional character, made up of representatives from all the political and social forces of Puerto Rico chosen on an equal elective basis; and, fourthly, to negotiate such measures as a transitional status of the juridical and political condition of Puerto Rico until the self-determination right is effectively exercised.

The Special Tribunal further called upon the United States Government "to accord prisoner-of-war status to those Puerto Rican prisoners captured as anti-colonial combatants".

(Mr. Harvey)

Our Association has repeatedly pronounced itself sceptical at the sincerity of the United States Government's oft-repeated intention to conduct a plebiscite on the future status of Puerto Rico. The history of those who seek to hold onto colonial power abounds with similar promises and proposals, from the puppet regimes through which racist minorities sought to retain power in places they called Rhodesia and South West Africa on down to the recently failed "talks about talks", through which the British Government sought to exclude its political opponents from the resolution of Ireland's troubles, and now the "talks about negotiations about talks", whereby Israel holds the world to ransom in its determination to keep the Palestinian people in permanent bondage.

As we and others previously predicted, the Puerto Rico plebiscite has proved to be no more than a mirage and the commitment of the United States to the protection of peoples from invasion and foreign domination remains limited to those peoples which it wishes to keep under its own domination.

We remain convinced, however, that by the forceful reassertion within the United Nations of the right of peoples to true self-determination, such cynical attempts at manoeuvring world power in the interests of one super-Power will be thwarted. Zimbabwe and Namibia are free, their peoples are sovereign. The African National Congress moves forward daily as a shining example to all of the ability of a people to act as one in creating a non-racial, non-sexist and truly democratic society. We believe that the peoples of Palestine and Ireland will also succeed where bigotry and colonial mentalities now conspire to repress their aspirations; for, despite the innumerable problems that now confront the peoples of this rapidly changing world, there is a new spirit alive in those peoples, and it is the spirit of resistance to foreign domination.

(Mr. Harvey)

The economic self-determination of the Americas has too long been subordinated to the demands of the economy of the United States. The economy of Puerto Rico has been deliberately subjected to the economic needs of the Metropolitan Power without consideration for the rights and needs of the island of Puerto Rico. The needs of the peoples of the Caribbean and Latin America are human needs and their human rights include economic rights. If there is to be a new world order of any sort, then it must be an order that outlaws such acts as the trade embargo against the people of Cuba and the debt enslavement of Latin America by foreign banks, which have proved themselves to be rapacious and irresponsible.

(Mr. Harvey)

As we have done in previous years, we once more urge the Special Committee to consult with the Secretary-General in order to discuss how best the people of Puerto Rico and the international community as a whole may be assured that the full provisions of the decolonization Declaration are implemented fairly and faithfully so that the people of Puerto Rico may finally decide on their own future without the undue political, cultural, military and economic influence of the colonial Power.

In the context of Puerto Rico, we respectfully submit that, before any free and fair exercise of rights can take place, the following minimum conditions must be met: first, release all Puerto Rican political prisoners and prisoners of war; secondly, drop all pending charges against Puerto Rican independentistas in the United States and Puerto Rico; thirdly, disband and remove all agents of the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation from Puerto Rico; fourthly, abolish the colonial English-language only United States Federal Court in Puerto Rico - and I pause here to say that in April of this year the Governor of Puerto Rico signed into operation a new law announcing that Spanish is the official language of Puerto Rico; nevertheless, the colonial courthouse in old San Juan still administers law exclusively in English, a clear example of colonialism - and, finally, the United States must discharge all agents of the Police of Puerto Rico responsible for compiling the so-called subversives list and for other acts of colonial repression.

Mr. Harvey withdrew.

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): We have thus concluded the hearings on this item. On behalf of the Committee and on my own behalf I wish to express appreciation to the representatives of the organizations concerned for the statements and information they have furnished to the

(The Chairman)

Committee, as well as for the efforts they made to keep within the time-limit, which was essential in order for the Committee to complete its full agenda.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The CHAIRMAN (interpretation from Spanish): I wish to draw members' attention to draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1769, presented by the delegation of Venezuela, which was distributed yesterday afternoon. The delegation of Venezuela submitted a revised form of that draft resolution this morning, and I understand from the Secretariat that every effort is being made to have that document circulated later this afternoon. I hope that that can be done and that the Committee will be able to take up this item once again tomorrow afternoon, hear any statements that members of the Committee may wish to make and perhaps take action on the draft resolution.

The programme of work for tomorrow, 14 August, will also include the question of Western Sahara, and in this connection we shall hear one petitioner. We shall continue consideration of the report of the Sub-Committee on Small Territories and resume the general debate on the items on activities of foreign economic and other interests, on military activities and on implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies, with a view to concluding debate on these items by the close of tomorrow's meetings.

Also scheduled for our meetings tomorrow is the continuation of our consideration of the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). Members will recall that we have already heard the petitioners on this item and that a draft resolution, contained in A/AC.109/L.1767, has been submitted. I suggest that we conclude consideration of this item and take action on the draft resolution tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/AC.109/PV.1393
10 September 1991

ENGLISH

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 1393rd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 14 August 1991, at 10 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. SLABY
(Vice-Chairman)

(Czechoslovakia)

- Question of Western Sahara (continued)
- Question of Pitcairn: report of the Subcommittee on Small Territories (continued)
- Question of St. Helena: report of the Subcommittee on Small Territories (continued)
- Question of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands: report of the Subcommittee on Small Territories (continued)

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Any corrections to the records of this meeting and of other meetings will be issued in a corrigendum.

- Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands, United States Virgin Islands: report of the Subcommittee on Small Territories (continued)
- Draft report to the General Assembly
- Activities of foreign economic and other interests which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination in southern Africa (continued)
- Military activities and arrangements by colonial powers in Territories under their administration which might be impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (continued)
- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (continued)
- Question of sending visiting missions to Territories
- Organization of work

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Slaby (Czechoslovakia), Vice Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 11.05 p.m.

QUESTION OF WESTERN SAHARA (A/AC.109/1082) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: In connection with this item, the Committee has before it a working paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.109/1082).

Members will recall that at its 1387th meeting, on 9 August, the Committee granted a request for hearing relating to this item. Accordingly, I invite Mr. Mouloud Said, on behalf of the Frente POLISARIO, to take a place at the petitioners' table.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Mouloud Said (Frente POLISARIO), took a place at the petitioners' table.

The CHAIRMAN: I call on Mr. Said.

Mr. SAID (interpretation from Spanish): Allow me first, Sir, to congratulate the Chairman on his election to the Chair of the current session of the Special Committee, which has the noble task of protecting and upholding the rights of peoples still under colonial rule. His qualifications and great experience guarantee the successful outcome of this session's work. I should also like to congratulate all the other officers of the Committee.

Speaking in the Committee on behalf of the Sahraoui people, I wish to express our gratitude to the Special Committee of 24, which for almost a quarter of a century has considered with such great interest the legitimate right of the Sahraoui people to self-determination and independence. It is thanks to the efforts of the Special Committee that the question of Western Sahara at the United Nations has reached its present stage. Notwithstanding the advanced phase the peace process has reached, the question of Western

(Mr. Said)

Sahara remains - and will remain - the responsibility of the Special Committee until the Sahraoui people has freely expressed its legitimate right to self-determination, until the definitive decolonization of Western Sahara.

The settlement plan prepared by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and adopted unanimously by the Security Council on 29 April this year, constitutes an honourable compromise, one which, if strictly implemented, with full respect for both its letter and spirit, will enable the Sahraoui people freely to choose its own future.

Success in the implementation of the settlement plan depends to a great extent - and, indeed, primarily - on the will and the level of cooperation of the two parties with the United Nations. Recognizing the fact that the objective of the plan is to define, under the auspices of the United Nations and the OAU, the status of and sovereignty over Western Sahara, within its internationally recognized frontiers, it would make no sense at all if one of the parties were to place obstacles in the way of the implementation phase of the plan, demanding respect for its sovereignty as if what were happening were just a referendum on an internationally recognized part of Moroccan territory.

(Mr. Said)

The POLISARIO Front wanted to believe that Morocco had accepted the peace plan in good faith, but Morocco has not exactly convinced us of its good will. In the implementation phase of the peace process, whenever we move ahead we find new impediments arising, as testified to by the Moroccan air raids of 4 and 5 August in areas under Sahraoui control, together with the massive concentration of Moroccan troops that is now taking place, suggests the possibility that they may intend to cross their defensive lines, which would not bode well for the successful outcome of the peace plan.

For the sake of peace in the region, we would hope that Morocco would adopt a constructive position which would enable the United Nations and the OAU to complete the noble mission they have set themselves, so that the United Nations - and only the United Nations - would be enabled to interpret and implement the settlement plan the two parties have formally endorsed.

Since the beginning of the peace process in 1986, the POLISARIO Front has adopted a position of full cooperation with the United Nations and the OAU, and it is thanks to its flexibility and open-mindedness that the preparation of the peace plan was facilitated.

Now that we find ourselves on the eve of the formal entry into force of the cease-fire, on 6 September this year, the POLISARIO Front and the Sahraoui Government solemnly declare their total commitment to the letter and spirit of the settlement plan and their full and sincere cooperation with the United Nations and the OAU for the strict and total implementation of the peace plan.

The POLISARIO Front wishes to pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General and his staff, and to the OAU, for their efforts to find a just and definitive solution to this 16-year-old conflict between the Sahraoui people and Morocco.

(Mr. Said)

Before concluding, I should like to thank those countries that have recognized the Sahraoui Republic for the firm and unconditional support they have given the Sahraoui cause, which has done much to help it reach its present phase, with an imminent solution in sight.

Moreover, we should like to thank all the countries that have contributed staff to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in various spheres, as well as those that have contributed to the special fund for the repatriation of Sahraoui refugees.

With your permission, Sir, and while still speaking as a petitioner, I have a small comment to make on working paper A/AC.109/1082. While this is a completely factual document, there is one paragraph to which we could not fail to draw attention. However, before making my comment, I wish to congratulate those involved in the preparation of the document; I know it has not been easy to compile all the information for the past year.

Paragraph 29 reports the visit of His Majesty King Hassan II to the city of Smara in the occupied Territory of Western Sahara; it is based on an article which appeared in El Pais of 25 April 1991. A sentence of this article taken out of context changes the import of the article totally. It says:

"On 18 May 1991, it was reported that King Hassan II had visited the city of Smara, in the Territory, where tens of thousands of people came to greet him." (A/AC.109/1082, para. 29)

There was another article published on that same date in El Pais, describing how those thousands of people came together. They had been forced out of their homes in El Aaiun, Dakhla and various other Sahraoui cities and made to greet Hassan II. They spent a week in concentration camps where they had to

(Mr. Said)

await the arrival of the Moroccan King. That sentence is taken completely out of context and totally alters the sense of what happened, since it leaves the reader under the impression that he received a warm popular greeting.

Mr. Said withdrew.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any member wish to speak at this stage? Since that is not the case, the Committee will continue consideration of the item at a subsequent meeting.

QUESTION OF PITCAIRN: REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES (A/AC.109/L.1762) (continued)

QUESTION OF ST. HELENA: REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES (A/AC.109/L.1763) (continued)

QUESTION OF THE TRUST TERRITORY OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS: REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES (A/AC.109/L.1764) (continued)

QUESTIONS OF AMERICAN SAMOA, ANGUILLA, BERMUDA, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS, CAYMAN ISLANDS, GUAM, MONTSEERRAT, TOKELAU, TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS, UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS: REPORT OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON SMALL TERRITORIES (A/AC.109/L.1765 and Corr.2) (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: We shall first take up the report relating to the question of Pitcairn, contained in document A/AC.109/L.1762.

If there are no comments, may I take it that the Committee adopts the report and approves the draft decision contained therein?

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

(The Chairman)

We shall next take up the report relating to St. Helena, contained in document A/AC.109/L.1763. If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Committee adopts the report and approves the draft decision contained therein.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

We shall next take up the report relating to the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, contained in document A/AC.109/L.1764. If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Committee adopts the report and approves the draft resolution contained therein.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any member wish to comment on this item?

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): My delegation joined the consensus in the adoption of this part of the report of the Subcommittee, but I wish to state for the official record of this meeting that Norway has formal reservations on this draft resolution, based on the fact that Norway, in accordance with Article 83 of the Charter, is of the opinion that this item does not fall within the competence of the General Assembly or any of its subsidiary bodies.

Mr. FIOL (Chile) (interpretation from Spanish): The delegation of Chile also joined the consensus in the consideration of this item. However, we wish to place on record that it believes that consideration of this item is not within the competence of the Special Committee, bearing in mind that the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, in accordance with the relevant resolution adopted by the General Assembly, is a strategic Territory and hence it is up to the Trusteeship Council to consider its status and that of its

(Mr. Fiol, Chile)

population. It is through that Council and the Security Council that decisions should be taken on the future of the Territory.

The CHAIRMAN: Permit me to speak at this time on behalf of the delegation of Czechoslovakia. In doing so, I should like to join previous speakers and the delegation of Norway in making a formal reservation in connection with the adoption of the draft resolution on the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands. It is the opinion of the Czechoslovak delegation that the Special Committee, in accordance with Article 83 of the United Nations Charter, is not mandated to deal with this Territory.

Mr. KOLAROV (Bulgaria): My delegation joined the consensus on this issue, but I should like to state for the record our formal reservations concerning consideration of this question in the Special Committee, inasmuch as we consider the discussion of this issue goes beyond the competence of the Special Committee, in accordance with Article 83 of the United Nations Charter.

The CHAIRMAN: Since there are no further comments, the Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

We shall next take up the report relating to American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands, contained in document A/AC.109/L.1765. In this connection, I wish to draw members' attention to corrigenda 1 - issued in Russian only - and 2 to document A/AC.109/L.1765.

If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Committee adopts the report and approves the draft omnibus resolution on the above Territories contained therein.

It was so decided.

The CHAIRMAN: Does any member wish to comment on this item?

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): Actually, I had some comments to make on the report and it was my understanding that the matter could be resolved without taking it up from the floor. That is why I joined the consensus. The report we have before us contains 20 paragraphs that have not been decided upon by the Subcommittee, and thus not deliberated upon by the Committee at all. They have not been the subject of negotiations, and to my surprise I saw that we had these 20 new paragraphs in the report.

I spoke with the persons who inserted these 20 paragraphs, because they are identical - two paragraphs for each of the 10 Territories contained in the draft resolution. Since they are identical and since they are repeated with regard to all 10 Territories, it seemed very natural and in line with our agreement to have an omnibus draft resolution so that these 20 paragraphs could be reduced to two paragraphs and be put into section A of the draft omnibus resolution.

Furthermore, I had the impression that this would be agreeable also because the procedures regarding these paragraphs did not follow the formal requirements for their insertion as agreed upon by the Subcommittee. So in spite of the fact that we have just adopted this part of the report, I would appeal to the Committee that we put these two paragraphs into section A and delete them from section B.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): I was also hoping that this matter would be amicably resolved before a decision was taken, but I am sure that the members of the Subcommittee on Small Territories are fully aware of my submissions in both informal and formal consultations on these matters as they relate to the island developing countries.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

As the Committee knows, the language that we have adopted for all 10 Territories is drawn from what has occurred here in New York in the consideration of island developing countries and the action taken by the Economic and Social Council. I see no difficulty in the Committee adopting them.

When I made the submission, I also heard from a number of delegations, formally, informally and through consultations, that there were no difficulties in having them adopted, especially for the Pacific Island Territories. But we have also had extensive consultations with the Caribbean representatives on the possibility of having them applied to those Territories. I know of the recurrence of the two paragraphs in the preambular and operative parts of the resolutions on all 10 Territories, and of the need for them to be brought to part A of the omnibus resolution.

I agree to that, but I would like once again to be assured, as I was in the Subcommittee on Small Territories, that part A of the omnibus draft resolution will be read together with the specific resolutions on the 10 Territories. I have been given assurances and I have an agreement with the Norway delegation to have those paragraphs removed from part B and included in part A of the omnibus draft resolution. So I am in agreement, and if it is the wish of the Chairman to proceed in that manner, I am sure the others will agree to go along with it.

Mr. BEREZOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (interpretation from Russian): The Soviet delegation seeks clarification on the procedure for discussing this document. We would be pleased to receive some information from the representative of Norway, who did not identify to which two paragraphs of the document he was referring. The Soviet delegation is not a member of the Subcommittee that worked out this draft decision, and we would

(Mr. Berezovsky, USSR)

therefore like to have a more precise idea of what this is all about before we take any decisions.

We would also like to have light shed on the procedure. I had understood that we had already adopted the draft resolution, but we are now apparently in the process of revising it. Perhaps some new decision is needed.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): I fully understand the question and confusion expressed by our colleague from the Soviet Union. In fact, I was rather confused myself, because when we had finished the work of the Subcommittee and adopted the draft resolution, we had in fact adopted a draft resolution which did not contain the 20 paragraphs to which I am referring. There are one preambular paragraph and one operative paragraph that for some reason were included in the report after the Subcommittee adopted it without them, and I do not know with what justification the Secretariat has included them.

In the first resolution, on American Samoa, on page 8 of the English version of the report, the third preambular paragraph refers to natural disasters and environmental degradation, and recalls the recommendations of the Meeting of Governmental Experts of Island Developing Countries. I have nothing against the substance of that text. The trouble is that it is repeated word for word in every one of the 10 resolutions. Since there is identical language in all of them, I would like to have that language in part A of the omnibus resolution, because it is in line with the principle of the omnibus text as a whole. There is also the formal fact that the Subcommittee has never dealt with this language as it stands here.

In that same text on American Samoa, there is another paragraph on page 8 - operative paragraph 3 - referring to a text entitled "Challenges and opportunities: A strategic framework", which was adopted at the Meeting of

(Mr. Lehne, Norway)

Governmental Experts of Island Developing Countries. This is also an uncontroversial text, but I cannot see a justification for repeating these paragraphs in each resolution, which is the way the Secretariat has prepared this document, without consulting the Subcommittee. There is an agreement and understanding between the Ambassador of Papua New Guinea and myself that, instead of repeating these paragraphs 10 times, we put them into part A, which is the principal part of the omnibus resolution.

I am not opening or reopening anything following the agreement of the Subcommittee. I am simply referring to some paragraphs that have been included without the formal acceptance of the Subcommittee.

The CHAIRMAN: It is understood that the comments made by the delegations that have just spoken will be reflected in the record of the meeting and taken into account in the preparation of the Committee's report to the General Assembly.

May I take it that the Committee agrees with the adoption of the report as orally revised?

It was so decided.

Ms. BERMUDEZ (Cuba) (interpretation from Spanish): I would simply like to clarify one point concerning the draft resolution on American Samoa. In the Spanish version, on pages 8 and 9, in the last preambular paragraph, we read "bearing in mind the fragile economy of Anguilla". I believe that this is a mistake.

The CHAIRMAN: I can assure the representative of Cuba that this will be corrected in the revised version.

Since there are no further comments, the Committee has thus concluded consideration of the item.

That concludes the Committee's consideration of all the reports of the Subcommittee on Small Territories. I should like in this connection to place on record our most sincere appreciation to the Chairman of the Subcommittee, Mr. Ghazi Jomaa of Tunisia, and the Rapporteur, Mr. José Acosta-Fragachan of Venezuela, for the active role they have played in bringing the work of the Subcommittee to a successful conclusion. I wish also to thank all the members of the Subcommittee for their constructive contributions to the work of the Subcommittee.

It is my personal opinion that the achievement of such a great success as the adoption of the omnibus resolution is undoubtedly a very good step towards improving the effectiveness of this Committee in the future.

DRAFT REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The CHAIRMAN: In order to facilitate the submission in good time of the Committee's report to the General Assembly, I would suggest that, in keeping with past practice adopted by the Committee at previous sessions, the Rapporteur be requested to prepare and submit to the Assembly the various chapters of the report covering the items on which the Committee has concluded consideration. If the Committee has no objection to that time-honoured practice, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERESTS WHICH ARE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES IN TERRITORIES UNDER COLONIAL DOMINATION AND EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE COLONIALISM, APARTHEID AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (continued)

MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS BY COLONIAL POWERS IN TERRITORIES UNDER THEIR ADMINISTRATION WHICH MIGHT BE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES BY THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE UNITED NATIONS (continued)

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee will now continue its general debate on these items.

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): The problems of small Territories are peculiar and unique to that group of countries, and are in many cases additional to those of island developing countries. Besides the major problems of small size and population, limited natural resources and market size, single crop economy, fluctuating prices and proneness to natural disasters, Non-Self-Governing Territories and other colonial Territories are dependent on their respective administering Powers for economic and technical assistance, some areas of governmental operations and legislative assent.

Increasingly, the level and focus of economic and technical assistance from administering Powers do not satisfy the expanding developmental needs of the Territories concerned or are channelled through multilateral donor agencies. The United Nations and its specialized agencies continue to play an increasingly important role in providing additional external assistance to these Territories without bilateral considerations. The United Nations Development Programme provides assistance to these Territories directly through multi-island and regional projects of the Indicative Planning Figures (IDF), and also co-ordinates the activities of other organizations within the United Nations system.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

Since its sixth session, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted resolutions concerning the participation of Non-Self-Governing and other colonial Territories in the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. In resolutions adopted at the forty-fifth session, the General Assembly called upon the administering Powers to facilitate the participation of Territories under their administration in regional and international organizations, including specialized agencies.

In many respects, Non-Self-Governing and other colonial Territories do participate in United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, either through the delegations of their administering Powers or as associate members. However, there are impediments to the participation of some Non-Self-Governing Territories in the specialized agencies, as a result of policy decisions of an administering Power, the cost of such membership or procedural arrangements of the agency. In one particular instance, a Non-Self-Governing Territory - Montserrat - has been trying unsuccessfully for several years to gain entry into a specialized agency, even though it is willing to pay the contribution and despite several resolutions of the General Assembly calling on the administering Powers concerned to facilitate its re-admission.

As part of its new approach, the Committee could seek to identify all obstacles to the fullest participation of the Non-Self-Governing and other colonial Territories in the United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and, where these obstacles are institutional, to work with those agencies to eliminate them. Where the obstacles are with the administering Powers, their attention should be drawn to them and their cooperation sought in removing them. There should also be a review mechanism as part of this process.

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

The Working Group established by the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) to promote the access of Non-Self-Governing and other colonial Territories to United Nations assistance is to be commended and should receive the support of the Committee. Similar arrangements should be extended to other Non-Self-Governing Territories.

I wish to inform the Committee of my appeal to the Association of Small Island States, which participates in the intergovernmental negotiations on climate change, and to the Group of 77 for the inclusion of Non-Self-Governing and other colonial Territories in their considerations.

A new process of consultations with the specialized agencies could include an assessment by each agency of the participation of Non-Self-Governing Territories in its membership and programmes with a view to amending its rules of procedure to allow for membership where none exists. Consultations could also be held with administering Powers when it is known that a Non-Self-Governing Territory's request for membership is being denied.

Finally, as the last Chairman of this Committee's Subcommittee on Petitions, Information and Assistance, I have found that there has been a lack of participation on the part of the specialized agencies and other organizations. I have found it difficult to understand why this is so. I also note that for many years it has been a tradition in the Committee that the Secretary-General's office has not been involved in monitoring the activities of specialized agencies and other institutions in the work of this Committee with reference to Non-Self-Governing and other colonial Territories.

Therefore, I would appeal to the Committee that, in its consideration of the resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of

(Mr. Lohia, Papua New Guinea)

Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as it relates to specialized agencies and other international institutions, it request the Secretary-General to transmit whatever resolution we adopt to the specialized agencies of the United Nations and other bodies and also request aid to monitor it, so that these institutions may actively participate in the work of this Committee as we write the last chapter of decolonization in response to the Declaration on the Eradication of Colonialism by the year 2000.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee has thus concluded the general debate on these items.

QUESTION OF SENDING VISITING MISSIONS TO TERRITORIES

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): I wish to refer to our decision on 9 August, when the Committee adopted the draft resolution in document A/AC.109/L.1758 on the question of sending visiting missions to Territories. My delegation joined in the consensus but inadvertently failed to put on record its reservations on two paragraphs in that draft resolution.

The two paragraphs refer to some administering Powers not participating in the work of the Special Committee. A preambular paragraph notes this fact with regret and an operative paragraph calls upon those Powers to reconsider their decisions. My delegation agrees with these appeals to those administering Powers, but in the context of the draft resolution we adopted on 9 August, in which we talk about the question of sending visiting missions, we feel that it is inappropriate for this Committee to mention that fact. We therefore have reservations on the sixth preambular paragraph and on operative paragraph 3 of that draft resolution.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia): It should be recalled that, in our last Bureau meeting, we found it appropriate to have the last resolution of the Economic and Social Council pertaining to specialized agencies circulated among Bureau members. I was wondering if we might extend the same courtesy to the other members of the Committee of 24. Perhaps the Secretary of the Committee could help us by circulating the authentic version to all members of the Committee of 24, as we are holding consultations on a matter pertaining to the specialized agencies.

The CHAIRMAN: I have just been informed that this text has now been distributed by the Secretariat.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): I believe that I am recalling correctly that it was decided by the Committee that its Rapporteur, on the basis of that text of the Economic and Social Council, should present a revised draft to the Committee. Since it is now Wednesday and since the deliberations of the Committee are to be completed by Friday, I wonder when we might expect to see this text which the Rapporteur was committed to present to us.

Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia): On my way to this Conference Room, I took my daily bread of documents, as it were, and that resolution was not in the package. That is why I proposed that it be circulated. If it is one that we can get on request I shall proceed accordingly, and I thank the Secretariat for having had the foresight to circulate it earlier.

The CHAIRMAN: I now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. DE SOUZA (Secretary of the Committee) (interpretation from French): The representative of Norway referred to a revised draft resolution that the Rapporteur was to present to the Committee. Since the Rapporteur is not here, I can only convey that question to him.

As concerns the availability of the resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council this year in Geneva, the official text of that resolution has not yet been issued, but the version that was adopted, with the exception of one paragraph - operative paragraph 7 - is available at the documents' counter in this room.

Mr. LEHNE (Norway): The explanation just given by the Secretariat is satisfactory. Nevertheless, the fact remains that we do not have a draft resolution on that issue before us. It is now Wednesday and I still wonder how we can finish our deliberations without the draft text, in accordance with decisions already taken by the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: I should like to remind members that, according to our programme of work contained in aide-mémoire 11/91, our summer session is scheduled to close on 15 August.

Therefore, it would appear at this stage that, unless the Committee decides otherwise or agrees to hold night meetings, we have only three meetings, including this afternoon's, to complete our work.

We still have to agree on two draft resolutions and a draft decision relating to foreign economic and other interests, implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies, and military activities and arrangements.

The open-ended Working Group has been consulting for some time on the related documents. Under the circumstances, I can only reiterate my appeal to members to intensify their efforts to reach agreement as soon as possible on the drafts before them. In this connection, I understand from the Secretariat that, even if an agreement on those drafts is reached later today, we may not be able to take action on them on Thursday unless the 24-hour rule is waived. That forecast is based on the most optimistic scenario: the assumption that the processing services would be able to process those drafts overnight in order to make them available for consideration on Thursday. The Committee's urgent attention is drawn to that situation.

Mr. HAGOSS (Ethiopia): Indeed, as you have already indicated, Mr. Chairman, time is not on our side. But at the same time it must be noted that delegations have not been idle inasmuch as the consideration of the relevant draft resolutions are concerned.

In fact my delegation has been involved in the consultations that are being informally and ably led by the representative of Papua New Guinea, so that perhaps some kind of consensus text could be proposed to the Working Group for final scrutinization and recommendation to the full Committee. Again, we are aware of the legal and time parameters within which our colleagues in the Secretariat operate. We are keenly aware of them, but in order to ensure that the texts adopted are acceptable to all of us, we have decided to make yet another effort so that we can see eye to eye on some controversial issues.

Again, I am sure that the delegations involved in these consultations will make an extra effort, but these are also the realities as far as delegations are concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: I fully share the feelings just expressed by the representative of Ethiopia, but I would just point out that, since the middle of last week, we have held two meetings a day. I believe that the agendas of those meetings were rather heavy and that we have been working hard these past few days.

May I ask delegations whether they wish to meet informally, since we have now concluded the agenda for this meeting?

Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea): My delegation is not ready to go into the work of the drafting committee at this time because on the basis of our informal consultations we have not yet received any feedback from the liberation movements and delegations both within and outside the Committee, especially delegations from the African Group.

The CHAIRMAN: I share the opinion of the representative of Papua New Guinea, so I propose that we keep the agendas for today's meetings as scheduled in the Journal.

I wish to remind members that this afternoon we shall proceed to take action on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1767 on the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) and, I hope, on draft resolution A/AC.109/L.1769/Rev.1 relating to the Special Committee decision of 15 August 1990 concerning Puerto Rico.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.